(b) and (c) 95 applications were rejected and 18 were accepted. No application is pending.

The Voluntary Retirement Scheme was introduced primarily with the objective of reducing staff for the purpose of pruning cost and achieving higher productivity. The criteria for acceptance of applications for voluntary retirement was, therefore, based essentially on surrender of posts. Where the concerned Departments were not in a position to surrender the posts, the cases were rejected.

(d) and (e) In 1991, with a view to bringing parity with the Rules in Central Government and other Public Sector Undertakings, the qualifying service for voluntary retirement for Officers/Staff in Air India was reduced to 20 years from 25 years.

Expansion of operational network of IA in Assam

3894. SHRI BHADRESWAR GOHAIN : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any decision of Government to expand the operational network of Indian Airlines in Assam ; and

(b) what is the valid reason for not operating any flights to Lilabari airport of Assam for the last many years ?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD) : (a) and (b) Vayudoot is proposing to extend its operations in the North East, under which Lilabari airport would also be covered.

Expansion and growth of Guwahati Airport

3895. SHRI BHADRESWAR GOHAIN : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the Calcutta Airport is the main hindrance for the expansion and growth of Guwahati airport ;

(b) by when the Guwahati airport will be completed as growth centre and start operations by itself ; and

(c) whether there is any undue interference from Calcutta airport into the affairs and functioning of the Guwahati airport ?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD) : (a) and (c) No, Sir.

(b) Guwahati airport is an all weather operational airport. It is being upgraded as Model Airport. The following works are in progress :—

(i) The Terminal Building is being expanded and modified at an estimated cost of Rs. 12.45 crores to cater to 750 arriving and departing passengers. The airport handles 35 flights per week.

(ii) Apron is being extended at an estimated cost of Rs. 1.8 crores.

(iii) Airport Surveillance Radar and Monopulse Secondary Surveillance Radar are being installed at a cost of Rs. 28.15 crores.

(iv) Ground Lighting facilities are being improved at a cost of Rs. 55 lakhs.

These are expected to be completed by December, 1995.

Revival Schemes for Hotel Ashok Brahmaputra, Guwahati

3896. SHRI BHADRESWAR GOHAIN : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the Hotel Ashok Brahmaputra at Guwahati is in the red and is a losing concern ;

(b) whether it is also a fact that Government propose to dispose of this prestigious Hotel ; and

(c) if not, what are the revival schemes undertaken by Government to make the Hotel a profit making unit ?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) The steps being envisaged by ITDC management to make the Hotel a profit making unit include aggressive marketing efforts, development of human resource by imparting training at all levels, introduction of special tariff/packages, operational cost reduction, etc.

Proposal to Scrap Expenditure tax on Hotels

3897. SHRI DILIP SINGH JUDEV : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Department of Tourism has proposed to the Ministry of Finance to scrap expenditure tax on all Hotels, as part of the package of incentives to the tourism industry ;

(b) if so, the details thereof ;

(c) whether the Ministry of Finance has accepted the proposal and move to cut expenditure tax on hotels ; and

(d) what is the tax burden in each State, including local levies on Hotel industry ?